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Monday, August 12, 1935.

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Odds and Ends." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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A man in our neighborhood has been boasting about his wife's cooking for 15 years. He claims that a meal at his home will wake anyone's appetite -- even on the hottest summer day. This may sound extreme, but the neighbors all back him up. They say if he asks you home to dinner, he's pretty certain to make good his boast.

Well, one day when I was on the hunt for new ideas for summer meals, I asked this man's wife what she considered the secret of success in her hot-weather meals. Imagine my surprise when she told me she guessed it was odds and ends.

"Odds and ends for success?" I asked.

Then she explained, "That sounds funny, but I just mean that I try to have something odd or different at each meal. And then I always try to have a happy ending -- something extra good to top off with."

So, nowadays when I'm planning August meals, I always remember to let the odds have it -- and the ends, too.

If your family likes to start a meal with a lively cocktail, how about betting your odds on the first course? For example, how about making the familiar cocktails different? Try a mixture of half tomato and half sauerkraut juice, nicely seasoned. Or, try half tomato juice and half chilled clam broth.

If you prefer fruit cocktails, try making them a bit different with a dash of ginger ale the last minute. Ginger ale with grape juice is a good number. So is ginger ale with berry or cherry juice or with cider. Some people think that a fruit-cup of melon balls or pineapple is extra good with ginger ale poured over it.

"By all odds have something different for the main course now and then," advised the odds-and-ends wife I talked to. "You know you can serve hot dishes at any time of year -- hot dishes like roasts and stews and casseroles. But in midsummer be original and indulge in chilled meat and fish dishes. My family dotes on what we call main-dish molds. These are molds of jellied diced cooked chicken, lamb, veal or other delicate meat, or even jellied fish -- salmon and tuna particularly."

Then she told me that her favorite is a ham mold made of chopped ham and whipped cream with mustard and red pepper for seasoning and gelatin for jelling. This is a good way to use left over ham. Here's the way you make

ham mold for 5 or 6 people. First, soak 1 tablespoon of gelatin in 2 tablespoons of cold water. Then, dissolve it in one-half cup of boiling water. Now add two cups of diced cooked lean ham. Add 1 teaspoon of mixed custard and a few grains of cayenne pepper and one-half cup of whipped cream. Pour this in a mold, and set it away to chill. Then turn it out on lettuce and serve with horseradish dressing.

Another unusual mold is shrimp and diced hard-cooked eggs in a tart gelatin mixture. Then, both canned salmon and tuna fish are delicious in a tart jelly. As for your left-over cooked lamb, that's delicious and good-looking, too, served quaking in a delicate green mint-jelly mold, garnished with fresh mint leaves.

Speaking of mint, reminds me of a few odd numbers in the dessert line -- odd endings, I might call them.

Mint can make many a simple, everyday dessert quite different. And because the flavor is refreshing, it's especially good for summer use. An ordinary ice cream mixture will turn into a novelty dish if you add chopped peppermint candy by way of sweetening and flavor. Yes, and an ordinary stewed pear will become an unusual dessert if you cook it in sirup with green vegetable coloring and peppermint flavor. Chill mint pears in the refrigerator before serving. Another odd one is a bowl of chilled mixed fruit with chopped fresh garden mint sprinkled over the top. To add variety to a chocolate sundae or a chocolate milk shake, add a little mint flavor or a sprig of fresh mint and notice what a cool and different taste it takes on.

By the way, maybe you'd like a good recipe for chocolate mint sauce. Here's an easy one that you make in the upper part of a double boiler so it won't overcook. Just one point to remember here: Don't stir it during cooking. Let's see.... I think I have all the ingredients in my head without looking them up. First, melt 2 squares of unsweetened chocolate in the double boiler. Then add 1 cup of sugar; one half cup of milk; 1 tablespoon of butter; and a bit of salt. Mix and then cook for about 10 minutes -- or until fairly thick. Then take it off the fire and add one-fourth teaspoon of mint extract. Serve it hot or cold over ice cream or cake.

So much for odds on mint. Now maybe you'd like to hear about an oddity in pies -- or rather pie crusts. Did you ever taste pie crust made with graham cracker crumbs? This is a most delicious crust for a cream pie. Make it this way. Roll up enough graham crackers to make 1 cup of fine dry crumbs. Then add one-half cup of melted butter and one-half cup of sugar. No liquid needed in this kind of crust. The result is a crumbly mixture -- too crumbly to roll out so you line a pie-tin with it just by patting it flat on the bottom and sides. Bake this crust in a moderate oven about 10 minutes until it is slightly caramelized. The mixture blisters as it bakes, so when the crust comes out of the oven, pat it again, to smooth out the blisters. Then cool before you add the cream filling.

Let's see. Have we time to mention one more odd? Speaking of bananas reminded me of this one. Have the children in your family ever tried drinking their bananas? Well, here's how. Choose a ripe banana. Rub it through a coarse sieve. Add 1 cup of milk, vanilla to flavor, a bit of salt. Beat with an egg beater until smooth and fluffy. Pour into a cold glass and drink.

There's my offering of odds and ends for the day -- odd ideas to add interest to a summer meal, and some good endings to top it off with.

